



THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

A FOOD BLOG

Chicken Fajitas (from Cooks Illustrated)

Serves 4 to 6

CI's note: The chicken and vegetables in these fajitas are only mildly spicy. For more heat, include the jalapeno seeds and ribs when mincing. When you head outside to grill, bring along a clean kitchen towel or a large piece of foil in which to wrap the tortillas and keep them warm as they come off the grill. Although the chicken and vegetables have enough flavor to stand on their own, accompaniments (guacamole, salsa, sour cream, shredded cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese, and lime wedges) can be offered at the table.

My note: I think the oil can be significantly reduced, especially in the part of the marinade used to flavor the vegetables and chicken after they're cooked.

1/3 cup juice from 2 to 3 limes
6 tablespoons vegetable oil
3 medium garlic cloves, minced
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 1/2 teaspoons brown sugar
1 jalapeno, seeds and ribs removed, minced
1 1/2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro leaves
table salt and ground black pepper
3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 1 1/2 pounds), trimmed of fat, tenderloins removed, pounded to 1/2-inch thickness
1 large red onion (about 14 ounces), peeled and cut into 1/2-inch-thick rounds (do not separate rings)
1 large red bell pepper (about 10 ounces), quartered, stemmed, and seeded
1 large green bell pepper (about 10 ounces), quartered, stemmed, and seeded
8-12 (6-inch) flour tortillas

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together the lime juice, 4 tablespoons oil, garlic, Worcestershire, brown sugar, jalapeno, cilantro, 1 teaspoon salt, and 3/4 teaspoon pepper. Reserve 1/4 cup marinade in a small bowl; set aside. Add another teaspoon salt to the remaining marinade. Place the chicken in the marinade; cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate 15 minutes. Brush both sides of the onion rounds and the peppers with the remaining 2 tablespoons oil and season with salt and pepper.

2. Meanwhile, using a large chimney starter, ignite 6 quarts of charcoal briquettes and burn until the coals are fully ignited, about 20 minutes. Empty the coals into the grill, spreading them in a single layer; place an additional 20 unlit coals over the lit coals on one side of grill to create a two-level fire. Position the grill grate over the coals and heat the grate for 5 minutes; scrape clean with a grill brush. (For a gas grill, light all burners and turn to high, cover, and heat the grill until hot, about 15 minutes; scrape the grill grate clean with a grill brush. Leave one burner on high heat while turning the remaining burner(s) down to medium.)

3. Remove the chicken from the marinade and place it smooth side down on the hotter side of the grill; discard the remaining marinade. Place the onion rounds and peppers (skin side down) on the cooler side of the grill. Cook the chicken until it's well browned, 4 to 5 minutes; using tongs, flip the chicken and continue grilling until it's no longer pink when cut into with a paring knife or an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part registers about 160 degrees, 4 to 5 minutes longer. Meanwhile, cook the peppers until spottily charred and crisp-tender, 8 to 10 minutes, turning once or twice as needed; cook the onions until tender and charred on both sides, 10 to 12 minutes, turning every 3 to 4 minutes. When the chicken and vegetables are done, transfer them to a large plate; tent with foil to keep warm.

4. Working in 2 or 3 batches, place the tortillas in a single layer on the cooler side of the now-empty grill and cook until warm and lightly browned, about 20 seconds per side (do not grill too long or the tortillas will become brittle). As the tortillas are done, wrap them in a kitchen towel or a large sheet of foil.

5. Separate the onions into rings and place them in a medium bowl; slice the bell peppers lengthwise into ¼-inch strips and place them in the bowl with the onions. Add 2 tablespoons reserved unused marinade to the vegetables and toss well to combine. Slice the chicken into ¼-inch strips and toss with the remaining 2 tablespoons reserved marinade in another bowl; arrange the chicken and vegetables on a large platter and serve with the warmed tortillas.